PARTING WITH 'COLBERT' IS SUCH SWEET SORROW

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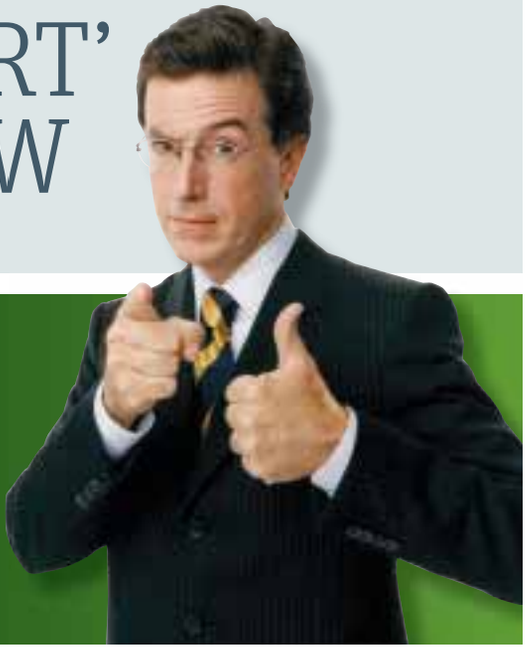

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Tuesday, December 16, 2014 **www.metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork**

STOP THE BULLETS

Where's our gun violence czar? Council member Jumaane Williams says President Obama should appoint a top official to end the plague of gun violence in America, after three more young men were shot in East Flatbush early Monday. PAGE 02

Blood splatters the sidewalk in East Flatbush where three young men were shot Monday morning outside the Cascades Catering Hall. / MILES DIXON, METRO

Vet kills six family members near Philly

PAGE 06

How well D'Angelo holds up 15 years later

PAGE 12

Kobe love highlights an NBA gone soft

PAGE 21

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—Karen Davis, BBA, Healthcare Systems Management, '14

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Williams asks Obama: Where's our gun czar?

Violence. Brooklyn Councilman says President Obama should appoint a czar to end inner city gun violence.

President Barack Obama should appoint a gun violence czar to end the epidemic of shootings in the country's poor neighborhoods, prominent City Council member Jumaane Williams said in an interview hours after a shooting in his East Flatbush district left one man dead and two others injured.

Cops arrived at the Cascades Catering Hall on East 45th Street just after midnight and found three men, ages 20, 25 and 16, who had been shot outside the venue by an unidentified gunman. The oldest and youngest victims were shot in their limbs. The 20-year-old, Quaron Isaacs, was shot in the back and died after being taken to Kings County Hospital.

"The president appointed an Ebola czar. I don't know why he wouldn't have appointed a gun violence czar, since that is killing a great amount of Americans," Williams said in a telephone interview.

On Monday afternoon, blood still splattered the front of the catering hall as detectives investigated the venue's exterior and questioned nearby business owners.

A police officer outside the Cascade Catering Hall in East Flatbush on Monday. / MILES DIXON, METRO

Quoted

"The president appointed an Ebola czar. I don't know why he wouldn't have appointed a gun violence czar, since that is killing a great amount of Americans."

Williams

The shootings Monday marked the second time in a month that an altercation at an East Flatbush catering hall turned fatal. On Nov. 30, four people were shot after a baby shower outside Remsen Hall, including a 22-year-old man who was shot in the chest. All victims survived that shooting, but those who passed by the scene of Monday's incident said crime is common in the area, a sparse portion of Brooklyn that is part industrial and part residential.

"We have to get at this in two different ways," Williams said of gun violence. "We have to deal with the supply of guns to these communities. We have to get sensible gun legislation. … And then, we have to deal with the demand for violence that too many people have. Even if there is a gun there, it doesn't mean you have to pick it up."

One teacher at P.S./I.S. 109, a new school that stands directly next door to Cascades Catering Hall, called the location surrounding it a "dead area." She said most teachers and students clear out by 4 p.m., and at night the neighborhood is desolate.

"In the day this area is fine, but at night things change," said a worker at Fazio Bros. Collision, an auto body shop around the corner from the club. "The clubs make a big difference. It's a big hangout," said the man, who asked not to be identified. "The residents complain about it but no one is doing anything about it. That club is supposedly one of the worst."

Gen Chavanes, an employee of nearby Glenwood Tires, said the opening of a homeless shelter on Glenwood Road has led to an increase in local crime. "We need more cop presence around," he said.

The area surrounding Cascades is in the center of a "square block of controversy and people who do not get along," said Errol Velazquez, one of the few local residents who would speak to a reporter.

"You have to attack the demand for this violence," Williams said. "I don't think people fully understand what they're doing to these families. They're destroying families."

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Visit **Metro.us** to read more about inner city gun violence.

A tattooed cat / YOUTUBE

Tats for cats? Inking or piercing your pet could land you in jail under new state law

Don't even think of inking your pet. New Yorkers who tattoo their domestic animals could face up to a year in jail and a fine of up to $1,000, under a law signed Monday by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The law will take effect April 2015. It's an extension of New York state's animal cruelty law. Only tattoings supervised by a veterinarian and used for medical or identification purposes will be allowed.

"The tattooing of an animal purely for the owner's selfish joy and entertainment — without any regard for the well-being of the animal — is not something the ASPCA supports," said Bill Ketzer, a senior official of the animal protection group.

State Assembly member Linda Rosenthal introduced the bill in June 2011, after a Pennsylvania dog groomer offered to sell "goth kittens" with multiple piercings.

Other reported cases include tattooed and pierced cows, pigs, horses and even fish.

Among the most virally celebrated cases of abusing animals are a North Carolina man who inked his 5-month-old puppy, and a Brooklyn man who this summer tweeted pictures of his pit bull, which he tattooed after it was operated on by a vet.

CATHARINA TUEMLING

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West Side subway station delayed

Waiting. Seven years after construction began, the 7 train extension sees more delays.

The long-awaited — and oft-delayed — 7 train extension between Hell's Kitchen and the Hudson Yards development had its launch date pushed back yet again Monday.

Scheduled to open Feb. 15, 2015, Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials said the planned station at 34th Street and 11th Avenue would now open in spring 2015.

The new date is a result of an unfinished fire alarm and safety system testing by the contractor, MTA officials told Metro.

In June, the beleaguered project was said to wrap up around February 2015, that was after the MTA announced in August 2013 that the train extension was "90 percent complete" and planned to open this past summer.

Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg even took a ride on the $2.4 billion extension days before his last day in office last December.

CHESTER SORIA
@chestersoria
chester.soria@metro.us

Construction continues on the 7 train extension on Manhattan's far West Side. / CARLOS LLAMAS, METRO

Police. PBA keeps the heat up, says de Blasio is 'out of touch'

Mayor Bill de Blasio's relationship with the leadership of the city's largest police union doesn't seem to be getting any better.

On Friday, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association launched a campaign for officers to disinvite both the mayor and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito from going to officer funerals, blaming what they argued is a lack of support by the elected leadership.

Asked about the stunt on Monday at an unrelated event, de Blasio lamented the hostile language as unacceptable.

"It's fine to have differences," de Blasio told reporters. "That's what a democracy allows for. But there still has to be mutual respect, and some voices in this city have decided to be divisive."

PBA President Patrick Lynch bit back and accused de Blasio of being out of touch. CHESTER SORIA

Mayor de Blasio / GETTY

Epidemic

College sex assault 'stories' similar to mishandling of military cases

Colleges are mishandling reports of sexual assault on campus in much the same way that the U.S. military mishandled an epidemic of sexual assault in the ranks of the armed forces, said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who sponsored a bill to change the way the military prosecutes sexual assault cases.

"The problem is similar, you have an institutional bias, you have an institution that's holding all the cards, that gets to decide what cases are handled ... and in the military, it's very much a closed system," Gillibrand said at a conference on campus sexual assault held at Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan Monday.

"A lot of the people who are deciding these cases are not trained, they don't know anything about the crime itself, or rules of evidence in a college setting," said Gillibrand, who is co-sponsoring the Campus Accountability and Safety Act. The law would provide more support to victims and require campuses to be more transparent in reporting incidents.

One in five women are assaulted in college, according to the National Institute of Justice.

WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Gillibrand / GETTY IMAGES

NYPD: Six suspects in cop attack

Screen grabs from video show the police assailants. / METRO

Violence. Two officers were assaulted on the Brooklyn Bridge following Saturday's march.

The NYPD is looking for six people suspected of assaulting two police lieutenants on the Brooklyn Bridge on Saturday night.

The suspects took part in the Millions March NYC protest, along with tens of thousands of protesters.

"We don't take attacks on our police officers lightly — never had and never will," NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton said at a presser late Monday.

Stills taken from at least one YouTube video uploaded Sunday show three unidentified men and three unidentified women struggling with lieutenants Philip Chan and Patrick Sullivan.

Bratton said Chan and Sullivan, who were on the bridge on behalf of NYPD's legal bureau to monitor and protect protesters, were plainly identifiable as police when they attempted to stop Baruch College instructor Eric Linsker, 29, from reportedly throwing a garbage can at other officers.

Cops said the videos show the suspects knocking the officers to the ground, kicking them and throwing punches. Chan suffered a broken nose, officials said, and both men have contusions over their bodies.

Linsker was charged with assaulting the officers on Sunday. Police said the videos show Linsker resisting arrest and throwing a punch.

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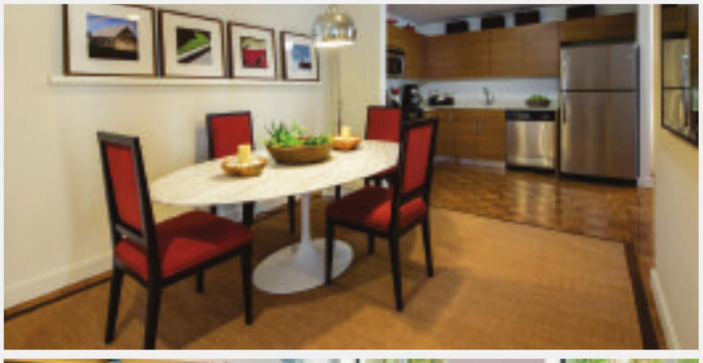

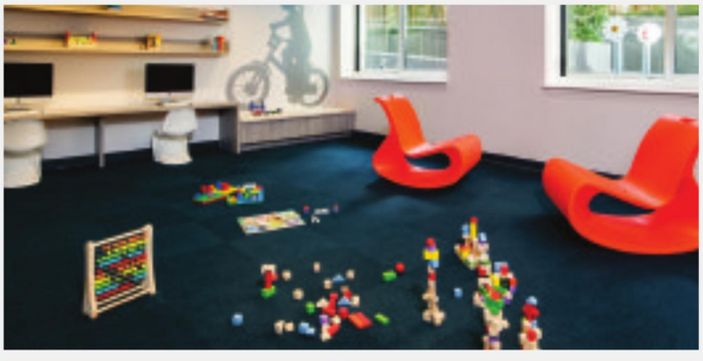

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Massacre. Veteran at large after killing six family members in PA

The military veteran who police say killed six family members and critically injured another in a shooting spree near Philadelphia on Monday was believed to have been chased by an armed civilian after attempting to steal the man's car keys in Doylestown Monday night.

For hours on Monday, police assumed Bradley William Stone, 35, was in his Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, house at Main and W. 4th streets, according to police sources at the scene.

SWAT teams surrounded the home, demolished the garage behind the house, extinguished lights on the street and evacuated neighbors from nearby homes as they fired gas canisters and stun grenades into the small frame home decorated with an American flag.

Around 7:30 p.m. police abandoned the home and fanned out into Philadelphia's suburbs.

Stone / COURTESY

Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman said the victims were all members of Stone's wife's family. Multiple media reports said the shootings may have been tied to a custody battle.

Press reports say Stone is a Marine Corps veteran of Iraq, where he served as a weatherman with an artillery unit. They said he may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Stone is believed to have killed the six people at three different locations.

Police followed a "hangup" 911 call to the Lansdale home of Stone's former grandmother-in-law and mother-in-law around 4:30 a.m. Monday. Police found both women shot to death, Ferman said.

At 4:55 a.m., more than 7 miles from the Lansdale home, a neighbor alerted police to a disturbance at the apartment of Nicole Hill on the 150 block of Main Street in the Harleysville section of Lower Salford Township. Hill, Stone's 33-year-old ex-wife and the mother of his children, was found shot to death.

The DA said at 5 a.m. Stone took the couple's two daughters, ages 8 and 5, to his hometown of Pennsburg, dropping them off at a neighbor's house.

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Tsarnaev to appear in court this week

Suspect. He faces the death penalty if convicted of the largest mass-casualty attack on U.S. soil since 9/11.

Boston Marathon bombing Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is due to appear in court in Boston this week for the first time in more than a year, at a final hearing before his trial begins next month, one of his attorneys said on Monday.

Tsarnaev, 21, is charged with killing three people and injuring more than 260 with two homemade pressure-cooker bombs left at the race's crowded finish line on April 15, 2013. Three days later as Tsarnaev and his older brother, Tamerlan, attempted to flee the city, federal prosecutors contend they shot and killed a university police officer.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev
METRO FILE PHOTO

Deaths

3

Three people died in the bombing attack: 29-year-old restaurant manager Krystle Campbell, graduate student Lingzi Lu, 23; and 8-year-old Martin Richard. MIT police officer Sean Collier, 27, was killed three days later.

Tamerlan, 26, died later that night after a gun battle with police and Dzhokhar was arrested on April 19, 2013, when officers found him hiding in a dry-docked boat in a Watertown, Massachusetts, backyard.

Tsarnaev has not been seen in public since July 2013, when he appeared in U.S. District Court in Boston to plead not guilty to 30 criminal counts linked to the attack.

At the time, his left arm was in a cast and his face was swollen, signs of injuries sustained during his arrest.

Jury selection in Tsarnaev's trial is due to begin Jan. 5. The trial itself is expected to run two to three months.

REUTERS

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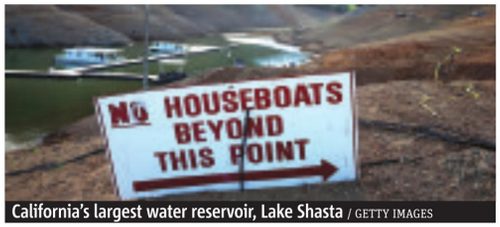

California's largest water reservoir, Lake Shasta / GETTY IMAGES

Record rains fell in California this week. They're not enough to change the course of what scientists are now calling the region's worst drought in at least 1,200 years.

Modern measurements already showed it's been drier than the 1930s dust bowl, worse than the historic droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. New research going back further than the Viking conquests in Europe still can't find a drought as bad as this one.

To go back that far, scientists consulted one of the longest records available: tree rings. Tighter rings mean drier years, and by working with California's exceptionally old trees, researchers from University of Minnesota and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute were able to reconstruct a chronology of drought in southern and central California. They identified 37 droughts that lasted three years or more, going back to the year 800.

None were as extreme as the conditions we're seeing now.

One of the oddities of this drought is that conditions aren't just driven by a lack of rainfall. There have been plenty of droughts in the past with less precipitation. (The drought of 1527 to 1529, for example, was killer.) What makes this drought exceptional is the heat. BLOOMBERG

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AR-15 assault weapon

Newtown victims' families sue gunmaker

The families of nine people killed in a 2012 massacre at a Newtown, Connecticut, elementary school on Monday sued the maker of the gun used in the attack, saying the weapon should not have been sold because it had no reasonable civilian purpose.

While the AR-15 assault weapon used in the attack on Sandy Hook Elementary School was legally sold in Connecticut, the lawsuit contends that the weapon should not have been available to 20-year-old gunman Adam Lanza. The AR-15 is manufactured by Bushmaster, a privately held company based in Windham, Maine.

The lawsuit, filed in Connecticut Superior Court in Bridgeport by the families of nine of the people killed and a 10th person who was wounded, seeks unspecified monetary damages. REUTERS

Quoted

"This is a weapon that is designed for military use, for killing as many people as efficiently as possible."

Michael Koskoff, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, in a phone interview

Nearly extinct

Rare white rhino dies at San Diego zoo

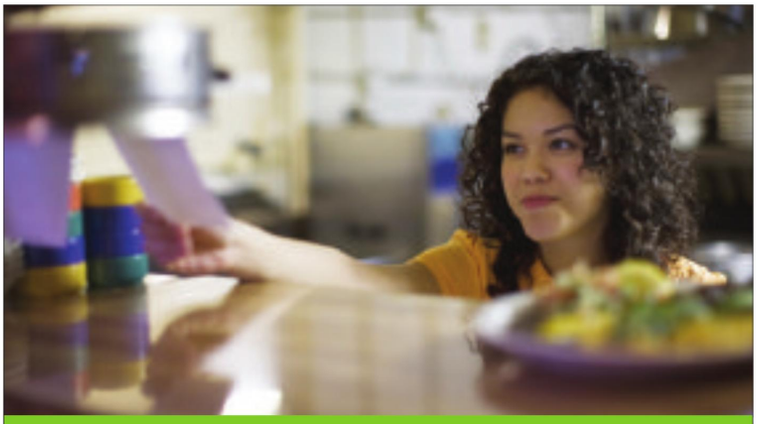
One of only six northern white rhinoceros left on Earth died over the weekend at a San Diego zoo, bringing the species closer to extinction, zoo officials said on Monday.

Angalifu, who was about 44 years old and being treated for age-related conditions, died on Sunday, according to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

The world's only known remaining northern white rhinos are an elderly female still at the Safari Park, one at a zoo in Europe and three in Africa, the California zoo said in a statement.

"Angalifu's death is a tremendous loss to all of us," Randy Rieches, curator of mammals for the zoo, said in a statement. REUTERS

NORTHERN WHITE RHINOCEROS /REUTERS



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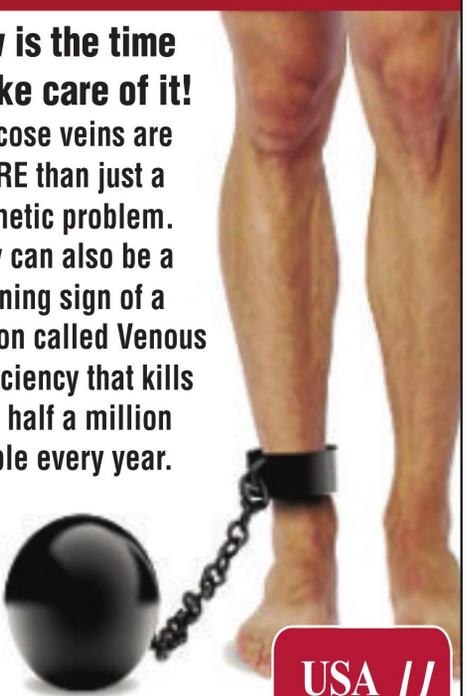

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Police storm Sydney cafe to end hostage siege, three dead

Terror. The incident forced the evacuation of nearby buildings and sent shockwaves around the country.

Hostages run with their hands up from the Lindt Cafe in Sydney, Australia. / GETTY IMAGES

By the numbers

17
The gunman held 17 hostages when the siege began.

3
Three people were killed, two hostages and the gunman.

16
The seige lasted 16 hours.

Heavily armed Australian police stormed a Sydney cafe on Tuesday and freed a number of hostages being held at gunpoint in a dramatic end to the siege.

Heavy gunfire and blasts from stun grenades filled the air shortly after 2 a.m. local time.

Moments earlier, at least six people believed to have been held captive managed to flee after gunshots were heard coming from the cafe, and police later confirmed that they made their move in response.

"They made the call because they believed at that time if they didn't enter there would have been many more lives lost," said Andrew Scipione, police commissioner for the state of New South Wales.

The operation began shortly after a police source named the gunman as Man Haron Monis, an Iranian refugee and self-styled sheikh facing multiple charges of sexual assault as well as being an accessory to murder.

He was also found guilty in 2012 of sending offensive and threatening letters to families of eight Australian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, as a protest against Australia's involvement in the conflict, according to local media reports.

A U.S. security official said the U.S. government was being advised by Australia that there was no sign at this stage that the gunman was connected to known terrorist organizations.

During the siege, hostages had been forced to display an Islamic flag, igniting fears of a jihadist attack. REUTERS

Quoted

"Do not let this sort of incident bring about any loss of confidence of working or visiting our city. It was the act of an individual."
Scipione

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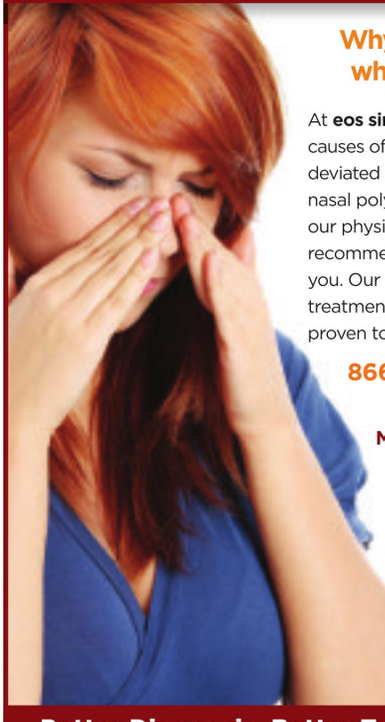

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Timothy Sykes is a millionaire stock trader and entrepreneur.

Best and cheapest holiday gifts to give

As a multimillionaire, I'm often asked what I'll be buying my loved ones this holiday season. My answers surprise them, but they shouldn't. See the best holiday presents below; they're far cheaper and easier to get than you ever imagined.

Best Gift #1: Your Love

Giving gifts is really just an excuse to show that you care about someone. Our society idolizes material possessions, but deep down all anyone really wants is to be loved. I'm guilty of flashing my Lamborghini and luxury trips on Instagram, but while those luxuries are fun and worth working hard for, love is far easier to acquire and give. I'm not a hippie and I think the Occupy Wall Street movement is pointless, but it's good to remind ourselves of the single most valuable possession and gift in this world: love. It's free, but it's priceless.

Best Gift #2: Your Time

As my business of teaching people how to profit in the stock market has exploded, my time for friends and family has dwindled. So instead of gifting luxury goods out of guilt like I normally do, I'm doing something different this year and giving more of my time to those I care about the most. I've learned many expensive lessons in the past that material possessions just don't stack up against real conversations and experiences.

Props to Business Insider for interviewing me to talk about wealth and using the headline "Multimillionaire Trader Tim Sykes Says His Happiness Isn't About the Money."

Companies will do seemingly anything to market and hype their new products, exemplifying the lack of corporate ethics.

THINKSTOCK

Best Gift #3: Charity

It's of course great to spend time with loved ones during the holidays, but remember to think of those who are alone and have nobody. I hear sad stories every day from people, especially children, who haven't been as fortunate as I have and it's a great holiday gift to give to these people. Giving small gifts to those less fortunate can become some of the most rewarding experiences of your life. This week I'll be sponsoring a Make-A-Wish Foundation wish to help an ill child attend the Miami Heat basketball games, and I'll be delivering toys to nearly 100 children at the Boys & Girls Club of Miami. I encourage you to do the same in your neighborhood.

For exclusive commentary, visit **Metro.us/blogs.**

What Sykes is into this week...

1. *The U.S. stock market finally had a down week. Good. We need some consolidation after this long bull market.*

2. *My struggling New York teams, the Knicks and Giants, finally both won a game after long skids. Whew!*

GETTY IMAGES

3. *Allegations of torture will haunt the U.S. It's time we stop this cruelty once and for all.*

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2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Iggy Azalea is admitting she has a problem, Justin Bieber is maybe hanging out with the wrong crowd again, Kristin Chenoweth is making some big announcements, Diablo Cody is having trouble relating to her children and Patton Oswalt has some thoughts about Jesus.

@IGGYAZALEA: Addicted to adding ginger OR mint to every juice or tea I drink.

@justinbieber: Had fun with the homey @chrisbrown

@KChenoweth: It's official apollo13 is in my top five favorite of all time movies.

@diablocody: It's weird how so many of you have kids who are just like you. Mine are so different than me. For instance, they're outdoors right now.

@pattonoswalt: If the "X" in "Xmas" literally means "Christ" then can we call him "Jesus X" and also can he have a leather overcoat and finger lasers.

1 Lindsay Lohan vows to never return to Hollywood

She's thought long and hard about it, and Lindsay Lohan is through with Hollywood. "I won't live in LA again, hell no," she tells the Observer in a lengthy interview. "My friends tell me s— when they come over I don't want to hear. I don't even know who got married and who got pregnant. You turn on the news in LA and it is all gossip about people. All the stuff that is going on in the world right now and this gossip is the news? I love the BBC. I haven't heard myself mentioned on TV since I have been here. That has been really weird for me, and great." So there you go. The secret to keeping Lindsay Lohan away is to constantly mention her. I'd like to take this time to announce that Ms. Lohan will feature into every single thing I write from now on.

Ahem. Also of note? Lohan seems to suggest her past issues with excessive partying that got her into so much trouble weren't really her own fault but more the fault of her friends and their lack of creativity when it came to coming up with worthy social activities. Well, them and the paparazzi. "In LA I didn't know what to do apart from go out every night. That's when my friends were free. And I would go out and there would be all these cameras there and that's when it became difficult," she explains. Well, congratulations, London. She's all yours.

Lindsay Lohan is staying in London. / ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Review

D'Angelo releases surprise album

After days of speculation, R&B singer D'Angelo released a surprise album Monday at midnight, his first in 15 years.

"Black Messiah" is a timely statement. D'Angelo reflects on racial tensions in the U.S., filling tracks with layered guitars and militant drums. Elsewhere, he reverts to more sensual ballads about connection and requited love.

The album's first single, "Really Love," finds D'Angelo moaning to an object of his affection in his unmistakably soft croon. **DAN BUYANOVSKY**

The "Black Messiah" has returned, just in time for Christmas.

Daily video

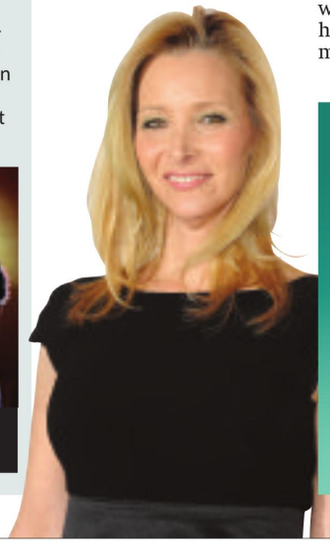
A very 'Avengers' Christmas

If that "Star Trek" version of "Let it Snow" didn't really light your candle, maybe something from over in the Marvel universe would be better. The YouTuber behind the "Trek" gag, James Covenant, is back with a supercut that makes the cast of "The Avengers" sing you glad tidings for Christmas and a happy New Year. It's a bit stilted, sure, but they're superheroes first and carolers second. And hey, there's a "Guardians of the Galaxy" bonus, as Groot does his rendition of "Jingle Bells." 'Tis the season!

YOUTUBE, JAMES COVENANT

2 Lisa Kudrow has some thoughts on those leaked Sony emails

While Sony has been busy siccing its lawyers on publications and sites that have been gleefully disseminating details from the massive hacker-fueled info dump, a lot of the damage has already been done — and people have opinions about it! Among those people? Former "Friends" star Lisa Kudrow, who is more disappointed in the execs for not understanding how a life online works than anything else. "How come I know you don't write anything you don't want broadcast in an email? How come I know that? Who's advising [these] people?" the "Comeback" star blasted during a HuffPost Live chat. "It doesn't matter how many times [an email] says, 'This is confidential.' ... Why don't we know that there are no rules? Everything is broadcast and published." She says that now, but just wait until the contents of her Amazon wish list are made public.



THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

NED EHRBAR
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3 Samuel L. Jackson calls celebrities to action

Samuel L. Jackson has a new challenge for celebs who helped make the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge successful. He wants them to raise awareness for the protests happening following a New York grand jury's decision not to indict a police officer in the choking death of Eric Garner. "All you celebrities out there who poured ice water on your head, here's a chance to do something else," Jackson says in a Facebook video. "I challenge all of you to sing the 'We Ain't Gonna Stop Till People are Free' song."

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The year in TV

With so many new ways to watch TV and so many new channels trying out original content, it's easy to hit TV overload. It would be frustrating, if it weren't a sign of how much great TV there is to watch these days. In that spirit, we've collected a list of shows to honor for the things we liked about them, rather than a simple top five ranking. **LISA WEIDENFELD AND LAKSHMI GANDHI**

Show we'll miss the most

'The Colbert Report'

Nation, it's hard to believe that in just a few days we'll be saying goodbye to "Stephen Colbert" the jingoistic, America-loving right-wing host of "The Colbert Report" — who's played, of course, by comedian Stephen Colbert. Since 2005, the show's loyal Colbert Nation has witnessed Colbert lampoon countless politicians and cable news pundits, profile many of those same politicians in his much-loved "Better Know A District" segment and lavish his beloved "Papa Bear" — talk show host Bill O'Reilly — with almost weekly praise. As Colbert leaves his "well-intentioned, poorly informed," character behind, it will be interesting to see how quickly his fans adjust to his non-satirical persona once his new CBS late-night show debuts in 2015.

SCOTT GRIES, PICTUREGROUP

Gone too soon

NICOLE WILDER, ABC

'Selfie'

For avid television watchers, it's always disappointing when a new show is cancelled just as it seems like it's finally hitting its stride. 2014's saddest cancellation casualty was surely the John Cho-Karen Gillan sitcom "Selfie." A modern-day twist on George Bernard Shaw's ugly duckling play "Pygmalion," the show followed a self-centered aspiring starlet (Gillan) who sees her growing social media fan base as her ticket to fame. Cho portrays the marketing exec trying to transform her into someone less self-absorbed. "Selfie" was pulled from the air in November after just six episodes. Fans did get one early holiday gift of sorts from ABC — the remaining episodes have been put on Hulu.

Best talk show guest

Emma Stone, 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon'

We decided not to just honor best talk show this year, because when we thought about it, there was one main thing that happened on a talk show this year that we watched over and over again: Emma Stone tearing the roof off with her lip sync renditions of Blues Traveler's "Hook" and DJ Khaled's "All I Do Is Win." While Fallon's other guests have acquitted themselves well in the competition, we're pretty sure it's Stone's efforts that inspired Fallon to create a spinoff show just for lip syncing.

GETTY IMAGES

Best guest stars

JOJO WHILDEN, NETFLIX

'Orange is the New Black'

Maybe this one is cheating, since the Netflix drama (comedy? dramedy?) calls various cast members that you probably consider regulars "guest stars," but we had to recognize show creator Jenji Kohan and her casting crew for their impeccable work finding little-known actresses who regularly knock it out of the park as the various inmates on the show. Laverne Cox (Sophia), Natasha Lyonne (Nichols) and Uzo Aduba (Crazy Eyes)? All nominated for Emmy guest star spots in 2014, and vital parts of what makes the show so great.

Best new show

'Transparent'

Amazon has been creating original programming for some time now, but they finally hit the jackpot with "Transparent," from former "Six Feet Under" writer Jill Soloway. It's a sitcom, in the sense that it's a half hour long and it's funny, but it can also be heartbreaking. The show tells the story of Maura, or, as her family knows her, Mort, who comes out as a transgender woman late in life. Jeffrey Tambor is fantastic in the lead role, and Amy Landecker, Jay Duplass and Gaby Hoffman are compelling as Maura's kids, who are working through their own issues.

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Meet two of the world's biggest Vine video stars

Video. These guys went from Vines to feature-length.

Vine sensations Marcus Johns, left, and Cameron Dallas made the film "Expelled." / METRO

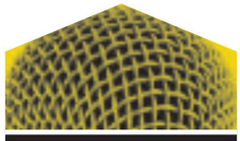
You know Vine, that video-based social network where users upload six-second clips for the world to enjoy? Well, you might not have noticed, but it's become hugely popular. In fact, two of its biggest stars, Cameron Dallas and Marcus Johns, have done so well that they're now looking to parlay that success into their first feature film, "Expelled." Dallas and Johns are hoping that their combined 11.9 million Vine followers will come along for the ride. But that doesn't mean they've given up on the format that launched them.

"It's really short and punchy, for people that don't have long attention spans," Dallas says of Vine. "Like for me, I can just sit there and watch little six-second clips all day. But for me to go watch a show and then watch commercials and stuff like that? I'd rather watch Vine than TV."

"Expelled" is basically a Ferris Bueller for the YouTube generation, with notorious prankster Felix (Dallas) trying to keep his parents in the dark about the fact that he's been kicked out of school. It also serves as an early testing ground for whether the new wave of social media stars can translate their online success into traditional venues.

CAMERON DALLAS AND MARCUS JOHNS
WIREIMAGE

"It was very challenging to go from six seconds to a full-length," Dallas says. "For a Vine, you're doing the whole shebang. You're the actor, director, you do everything. It was really fun for me to take the direction of what the director wanted and try and portray that."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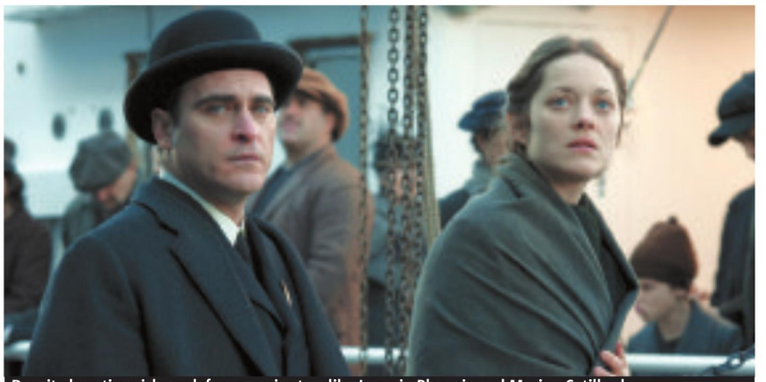
'The Immigrant'

Netflix Instant

The Weinstein Company is marshaling all its forces to get an Oscar nod for Jessica Chastain in "The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby." Chastain deserves it — but so does someone from another Weinstein release: Marion Cotillard in "The Immigrant." Dumped into theaters in the spring, it finds Cotillard's Polish immigrant making a go of it in 1920s New York, which proves particularly hard after she winds up in the clutches of a pimp (Joaquin Phoenix).

In more ways than one, "The Immigrant" is a film out of time — a retro melodrama from retro stylist James Gray ("We Own the Night," "Two Lovers"). Filmed (on film) in smoky ochre tones, it dedicates a fair chunk of its length to that old standby: the close-up. Cotillard doesn't speak much, but the camera gets in close, studying a performance done largely with minute facial expressions. Cotillard may wind up with an Oscar nom for another film: the Belgian drama "Two Days, One Night." But if "The Immigrant" winds up with no trophies, it at least deserves more eyes.



Despite boasting rich work from movie stars like Joaquin Phoenix and Marion Cotillard (plus Jeremy Renner), "The Immigrant" wasn't treated very well. / THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

Netflix Instant

'Manakamana'

This either sounds amazing or brutal: A two-hour experimental documentary that stares at various people riding a cable car going to and from a Nepalese mountain temple. There's no context, minimal talking and sometimes they're not people but goats. It's a film ripe for meditation, as well as primo people watching.

Netflix Instant

'Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues' (Super-Sized Version)

With the second Ron Burgundy romp, you can now get the original cut or the 23-minute-longer one that promises 763 more jokes. Still, if Will Ferrell and Adam McKay are doing sequels, they should get cracking on "Step Brothers 2."

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Buzziest books of 2014

It's hard enough carving out the time to watch "The Voice" or Googling how to keep your new iPhone 6 from bending; diving into a 400-page book can seem like too much of a commitment. Lucky for you, it's our job to read all the newly released books, and we're delivering the goods that will give you enough info to fake like you've been reading all year. Here are five books that came out in 2014 that will be dominating cocktail parties and casual conversation in 2015.

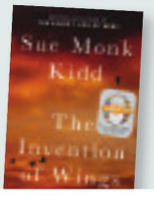
EMILY LAURENCE

1 'The Invention of Wings'

by Sue Monk Kidd

Two words: Oprah-endorsed. "The Secret Life Of Bees" author Sue Monk Kidd has another best-seller on her hands with her novel about a reluctant slave owner who forms an unlikely friendship with her slave during the 1800s.

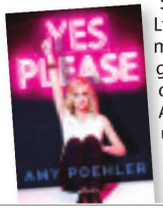
Line to drop at a party: "It totally inspired my New Year's resolution of crafting a story quilt."



2 'Yes Please'

by Amy Poehler

The "Parks and Rec" star chronicles her early days of comedy to her "Saturday Night Live" career in this memoir. She also gets real about her divorce from Will Arnett, past drug use and motherhood, among other things.



Line to drop at a party: "Amy is a classy broad. She talks about how heartbroken she was after her divorce without bashing her ex. That takes some epic restraint."

3 'Not That Kind of Girl'

by Lena Dunham

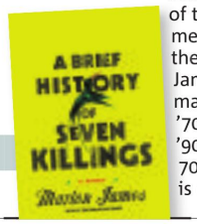
Not to be outdone, "Girls" creator and star Lena Dunham released a book of personal essays in which she talks about losing her virginity (spoiler alert: it was awkward), what it's like getting naked on camera (spoiler alert: also awkward) and how her friendships changed as she entered her 20s.

Line to drop at a party: "I wish she talked about her friendships with the 'Girls' cast more, and she only mentions Jack Antonoff twice. What gives? Maybe it's harder for her to write about what makes her happy than the things that give her extreme anxiety."

4 'A Brief History of Seven Killings'

by Marlon James

Using an attempted murder on Bob Marley as a focal point, Marlon James tells the fictional histories of the seven gunmen to expose the dangerous Jamaican climate during the '70s, '80s and '90s. Also, the 700-page tome is definitely not brief and it includes many more than seven killings. Just saying.



Line to drop at a party: "James narrates through dozens of different voices, yet it never feels disorganized or disjointed. That's what makes it genius."

5 'All The Light We Cannot See'

by Anthony Doerr

This novel has dual narratives, both taking place during World War II: One is about a blind 16-year-old girl living in France while the other follows a guy working for Hitler's side of the war, tasked with tracking down illegal radio transmissions. Their lives inevitably intercept in an anticipated, yet highly enjoyable climax.

Line to drop at a party: "The line 'open your eyes and see what you can see with them before you close them forever' changed my entire outlook on life."

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NYC tradition. With drones, clones and a live manger, 'Christmas Spectacular' is a hot ticket

Radio City Music Hall's "Christmas Spectacular" has been a seasonal staple since it kicked off in 1933, and the magic is still wholly intact in 2014. From the famous toy soldier kickline to the live animal manger scene, with annually evolving storylines in between, the show gracefully balances the predictability of tradition with the pleasure of novelty. (Spoiler alert: This year's twist involves drones! How's that for keeping up with the times?)

The sweet spot for young ones is probably ages 8 and up. The Rockettes, as always, are flawless in their precision and impressive in their numbers (you don't see many ensembles with 36 performers onstage at once these days, sadly). If you're bringing small kids, try to get seats in the front orchestra section. When ribbons and snow come shooting from hidden cannons or falling from the roof, they're going to wish they were one of the lucky ones getting coated in all of the spiffy debris. Plus, being closer might hold their attention a bit more (if dozens of St. Nick clones, dancing teddy bears and a mountain of gifts doesn't do it).

However, all attendees get to feel like they're part of the magic: As soon as you walk in, you're handed both a branded Santa hat and 3-D glasses, which are used during musical numbers.

One last tip: Spring for the large popcorn. The smell in the lobby will have your mouth watering, and the snack comes in a cool collectible bucket — a great alternative to the pricey souvenir stand.

The Rockettes are, of course, the stars of the show. / MSG ENTERTAINMENT

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Enjoy some live music while you sip a pina colada by the beach. Visit HalfMoon.RockResorts.com to learn more. / ALL PHOTOS BY LISA WEIDENFELD

Are you or your loved ones people who have trouble relaxing? Is it because you've never been to Half Moon in Montego Bay, Jamaica? It might be.

Sure, when you first get there after a few hours cooped up in an airplane you might be feeling tense. But then you'll head to your room, which probably faces the ocean, and sit on your porch watching the waves. At that point, it's pretty much impossible not to feel some tension drain.

The 400-acre Half Moon is one of the oldest resorts in the country: People have been vacationing there since the 1950s. It offers a variety of accommodations, from suites facing the two-mile-long, private beach (shaped like a half moon) to villas with five to seven rooms that come with their own cook, housekeeper and butler, plus a private pool.

Things to do

If you get tired of sunning on the beach, the resort also offers tennis lessons led by infinitely forgiving instructors, who will politely lie to you about how much your backhand is improving after you hit every ball into the net.

There's also an 18-hole golf course onsite — the flattest course in Jamaica.

Ocean-side relaxation

The biggest don't-miss is the signature massage experience, offered at the Fern Tree spa, a massive indoor/outdoor space.

Go for one of the sessions that takes place in a bungalow over the sea. You know those wave sound effects that usually get played during a massage? Try listening to the real thing, since the bungalows only have three walls, all facing the beach. The fourth wall is open to the ocean.

Resort chic

Dress code

If you're not lucky enough to have a private cook whipping up dishes in your villa, meals can be had at a variety of spots. The main dining area is Seagrape Terrace. It's open to the water, like much of what you'll find at Half Moon. If you like your resort stays with a side of gourmet dining, try the chic Sugar Mill. Be prepared, though: The resort takes seriously its casual elegance dress code, and Sugar Mill is a place to show off your finest while eating like a king. This is not the sort of restaurant where you throw a cover up over your swimsuit and walk with sandy feet into the dining area.

Royalty

Famous guests

The resort has long played host to bold-faced names. Jackie Kennedy once wrote a will while she vacationed with John, and the Queen stopped by a few years ago.

Prince Harry also rented out one of the villas for a visit in 2012, but alas, we were assured that nothing scandalous occurred.

LIVE LIKE ROYALTY IN THE VILLA PRINCE HARRY RENTED IN 2012.

LISA WEIDENFELD
@LisaWeidenfeld
lisa.weidenfeld@metro.us

PLUS

Friendly skies

Best layovers

WalletHub ranked the best cities to fly out of on the way to your vacation destination this winter, based on airfare, flight times, the number of flight connections, hotel costs and a few other factors.

Top departure points for travel in the U.S.:

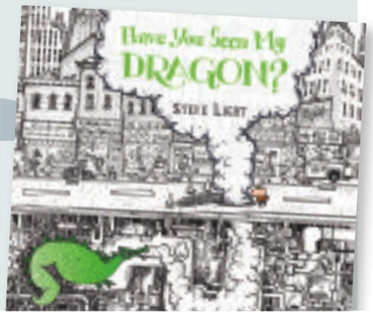
1. Atlanta, Georgia, and Salt Lake City, Utah (tied)
2. Charlotte, North Carolina, metropolitan area
3. Phoenix, Arizona, metro area
4. Denver, Colorado

Best kids' books of 2014

As study after study has shown, reading to your kids has benefits that extend past childhood and into the adult years. But with thousands of children's books being published each year, it can be tough to know which ones are truly worth buying. Parents magazine enlisted librarians, families and their editors to narrow it down to 10. Here, we share five of their picks. See the full list in Parents magazine's December issue. **EMILY LAURENCE**

1 'Have You Seen My Dragon?'

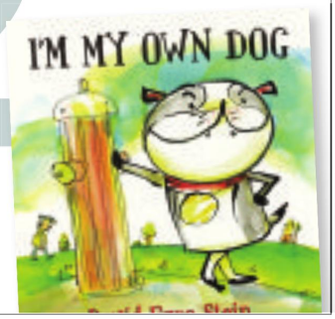
by Steve Light



This book makes learning to count interactive by incorporating a game of hide-and-seek into the pages. A little boy loses his dragon and must count up to 20 lanterns while searching for him all over the city. **$11.39, Barnes and Noble**

2 'I'm My Own Dog'

by David Ezra Stein



The tables are turned in this comical picture book, in which a bulldog teaches its owners how to sit and throw. Told from the dog's point of view, the pooch adopts a human, who despite all the work, proves worth keeping as a "pet." **$9.65, Amazon**

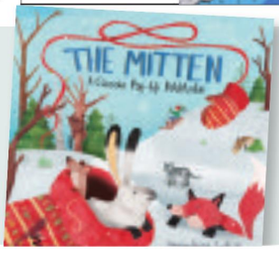
3 'Space Taxi'

by Wendy Mass and Michael Brawer, illustrated by Elise Gravel

The newest chapter book series for children ages five to eight is about an 8-year-old named Archie who learns that his taxi-cab driving dad has a secret: He's no ordinary cab driver. In reality, he shuttles aliens around the universe. Each book is a new adventure with plenty of real facts about the solar system snuck in. **$5.49, Barnes & Noble**

4 'The Mitten: A Classic Pop-Up Folktale'

by Jessica Southwick, Pippa Cornick and Yevgeniya Yereyskaya



The beautiful visuals, both in the form of pop-ups and colorful illustrations, make this book a winner — and a great holiday gift if you are currently hunting for one. The pull-outs have wheels and other actionable traits, which gives your little one something to do as you recount this old Ukrainian folktale. **$14.36, Amazon**

5 'A Snicker of Magic'

by Natalie Lloyd

Being a kid should be a magical time and author Natalie Lloyd really lets readers' imaginations go wild with this chapter book for kids ages eight and older. In it, a 12-year-old girl named Felicity moves to a town that has lost its magic and is now living under a curse. Felicity is a "word collector," and sees words other people can't see. A bonus to the story being entertaining: your pre-teen will learn loads of new vocabulary words. **$10.74, Amazon**

Holiday. Start a new family tradition with this Italian dessert

Eating a plate of homemade treats on Christmas Eve or after a long day of shopping has become a tradition for many families. And with the weather too windy and cold to play outside, baking with your kids can be a special way to spend the day.

Italian cafe Crave. it knows a lot about family traditions — and delicious treats. The New York City-based cafe specializes in Italian pastries, like warm apple and cream pocket croissants and apricot tarts.

Besides being a go-to spot in the city for an indulgent snack, the cafe hosts cooking classes for kids.

The Crave.it team shares one of their beloved holiday recipes with us here. It may look impressive, but Crave.it whipped these cake pops up with their kids baking class, so it can be done! It just may inspire a new family tradition. **EL**

Visit **Metro.us** for Crave.it's Italian cookies recipe.

Recipe

These cake pops taste as good as they look. / PROVIDED

Ingredients

- Crumbs of a plain vanilla sponge
- 1 cup vanilla buttercream (ready to use)
- White chocolate (or milk or dark)
- Cake pops sticks
- Decorations (sprinkles, chocolate chips, edible bows)

Instructions

1. Mix the ingredients and divide using an ice cream scoop.
2. Roll each portion of the mix dough with your hands to create little balls.
3. Put them on a tray lined with parchment paper in the refrigerator for about 1 hour.
4. Melt the chocolate and dip the cake pop stick into the melted chocolate about 1 inch deep.
5. Put the sticks into the cake pop balls, let them set at room temperature.
6. Once they're set, immerse the cake pop into the melted chocolate and let it harden.
7. Decorate as you wish. Get creative and have fun!

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Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. It's important to stay one step ahead of the competition. Be fearless as you face challenges. The end result will be a revelation.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20. Some of your confidential information will be divulged. As long as you can keep your financial matters a secret, you will land on your feet.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18. You will be surprised by an unexpected gift, win or bargain. Making the right choice now will ensure that you end this year on a high.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Don't let personal matters get you down. Communication and group get-togethers will be complicated and frustrating.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20. Form a bond with someone who interests you romantically or professionally. Don't allow a minor setback to prematurely end a project.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. You will gain greater insight into a situation developing behind the scenes. Medical matters are your responsibility. Don't entrust your information to a stranger.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. You should make changes that will raise your standard of living. A few adjustments may be all that is needed to improve your position.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. Don't settle for the status quo. Changes are inevitable, and it's important to keep looking into ways to improve your current job or obtain a new one.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. You will be in the limelight today. This is a great time to show off your leadership abilities. Take advantage of an offer.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Creativity and romance are highlighted. Dispense with your usual chores. Make your living space welcoming for the festive season.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. You may feel unsettled, but if you are patient, things will turn in your favor. Being oversensitive will put you in a vulnerable position.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. You can make extra money. This is a fine time to cement a deal that's in the works. You will receive wise advice from an older individual. EUGENIA LAST

Sudoku: Easy and hard

			9		3			
6		8		5	7			2
3	7							
	3			1	8		6	
	6	1				8	2	
	5		6	4			7	
							4	8
5			3	7		2		9
			5		2			

			1					9
	7			9		6	2	
2	3	9					8	
	4		5	6		8		
6								5
		5		7	4		3	
	2					5	6	3
	6	4		3			1	
7					2			

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters

The frankest discussion

Following recent grand jury decisions in Ferguson, Missouri, and Staten Island, New York, activists and average Americans are demanding, among other things, a discussion on race. I ask, for what? I remember well the robust, honest PBS program in 1992 moderated by Phil Donahue: "The Issue Is Race: A Crisis in Black and White." I was encouraged by the forum attended by Time magazine correspondent Sylvester Monroe, PBS journalist Tony Brown and Cornel West, then professor of religion and Afro-American Studies at Princeton, rapper/activist Sista Soulja and others. Unfortunately, the most profound statement of the two-hour discussion came from white activist educator Jonathon Kozol: "I heard this same debate 25 years ago."
LARRY D. FOWLER, VIA EMAIL

Goodbye, grand jury

One step in the right direction might be doing away with the grand jury system. If a district attorney thinks he has a case, indict the suspect. That way, ALL of the responsibility is placed squarely where it should be and not on a group of scapegoats whose decision is based solely on information the DA does — or doesn't — present to them.
BRUCE A. BENNETT, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

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Crossword

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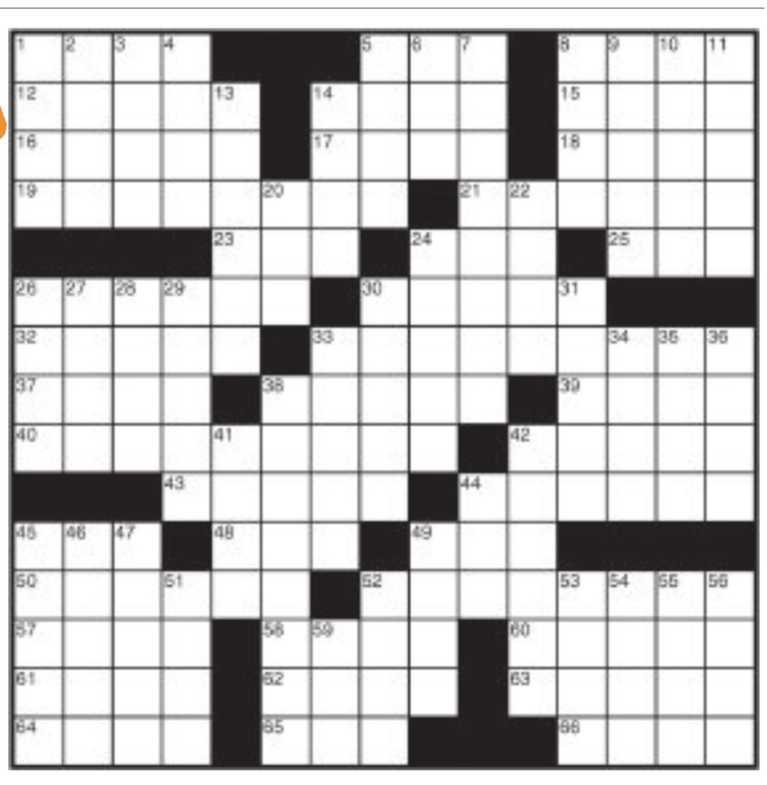
1 Ration out
5 Butter container
8 — Mawr
12 Iridescent gems
14 Laird's accent
15 Nautical greeting
16 Pigeonhole
17 Town near Lake Tahoe
18 London park
19 Pulls off
21 Destiny
23 TV brand
24 Desk item
25 Urban people-movers
26 Library user
30 Wall Street dread
32 Informed, slangily
33 Foxglove
37 Longish skirt
38 Kermit's color
39 Resist strongly
40 Night wear
42 Rabbit fur
43 Softball teams
44 Evolve
45 Crunch targets
48 — annum
49 Dinny's rider
50 Leave no trace
52 Office gadgets
57 Mr. Baldwin
58 Former Atlanta stadium
60 Unearthly
61 Ms. Dinesen
62 Cattle calls
63 Perry's secretary
64 Grande dame
65 Diminish
66 Market

Down
1 "— Lisa"
2 "Aeneid," for one
3 Muscle-car dial
4 Post-kindergarten
5 Wk. day
6 Footed vase
7 Like old jeans (2 wds.)
8 Words from Scrooge
9 Verse
10 Mountaineer's refrain
11 Putin's vetoes
13 Get mad (2 wds.)
14 La — tar pits
20 DVD predecessor
22 — — for the money
24 Errand runners
26 Mounties' org.
27 Newsman -- Abel
28 BMW rival
29 Vouchsafe
30 Landing places
31 Henry — Lodge
33 Paint additive
34 Roman moon goddess
35 Cool rapper? (hyph.)
36 Hebrides island
38 Out of the office (2 wds.)
41 Barely beats
42 Held gently
44 Extinct bird
45 Do the trick
46 Ultralight wood
47 Slammin' Sammy —
49 Elevator guy
51 Yucky
52 Social climber
53 Dregs
54 Dashiell's peer
55 Little creek
56 Close
59 Crowd



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KOBE LOVEFEST SHOWS THAT NBA HAS GONE TOTALLY SOFT

Basketball is at its best when there is tension between star players.

That's why it's so sad to see the route Kobe Bryant has taken in his old age. Bryant was once the lord of basketball beefs, highlighted by his bitter feud with Shaquille O'Neal. But this month, we've seen Kobe and the superstars around him go terribly soft.

Bryant began his month of holiday cheer by going out to breakfast in Boston with Rajon Rondo. That's right, a Celtic and a Laker sharing croissants DURING an NBA season and PRIOR to actually meeting on the court. Sunday night, matters became worse — so long as you like your hoop sprinkled with a little hatred. Kobe surpassed Michael Jordan for third on the NBA's all-time scoring list. It's a great accomplishment for Bryant, who has spent his entire career mimicking Jordan — right down to the fist-pumps and facial expressions. But the out-pouring of congratulatory tweets and in-person celebrations that followed were sickening for old school sports minds.

LeBron James, who should have spent the past decade passive-aggressively hinting at the fact that Kobe is the Kourtney to his Kim, chose to not only congratulate Kobe on passing Jordan but also decided to call him by his adorable nickname/middle name.

"Congrats Bean!" @kobebryant #ThirdAllTime #LivingLegend," LeBron tweeted.

Yuck.

And while Minnesota should hate the Lakers franchise for moving to LA way back in 1960, the way the Timberwolves and their fans showered Bryant with love Sunday night was a bit much. When's the last time a game was suspended for several minutes after a visiting player reached an individual milestone that placed him not No. 1, but THIRD all-time?

As if that wasn't enough, after the game the Lakers threw Kobe a party on the team plane - complete with soda, pizza, party horns, Chex mix, cake and Fla-Vor-Ice.

Kobe Bryant received a little too much love this past Sunday night. / GETTY IMAGES

Playing the field

MATT BURKE

MATTHEW.BURKE@METRO.US

RIP Gamblero

The Brooklyn Nets will hold a tribute for superfan Jeffrey "Gamblero" Vanchiro at Tuesday's game against the Heat at Barclays Center, according to ESPN. Vanchiro passed away Sunday after jumping from the window of his father's home Saturday night. A video of Vanchiro being escorted out of Madison Square Garden during a Dec. 2 Nets-Knicks game went viral after Vanchiro reportedly took off his prosthetic leg in protest of being asked to leave. MSG security even accused Vanchiro of hitting another fan with the leg, though that claim has since been disputed.

NHL power rankings | by Rich Slate

No. 1

Ducks (21-6-5)

The Ducks have the most points (47) in the league and they've won their last seven games. Corey Perry being out with a knee injury and their constant goaltending issues, so far, haven't been an impediment.

No. 2

'Hawks (21-9-1)

The Blackhawks lost, 3-2, at the Islanders Saturday, snapping their NHL-best eight-game win streak. Chicago bounced back on Sunday with a 2-1 win over Calgary.

No. 3

Penguins (19-6-4)

What started out as something to giggle about has quickly turned into an epidemic as Sidney Crosby was diagnosed with the mumps this weekend.

No. 4

Blues (20-8-2)

The Blues continue to play well, having won their last four games. Martin Brodeur (2-1-0) has provided a spark but it'll be interesting to see how its goaltending situation plays out.

No. 5

Lightning (19-9-3)

Tampa Bay has finally come back down to Earth a bit as it opened a key five-game road trip with a 4-2 loss at Washington on Saturday.

No. 6

Red Wings (17-7-7)

Few people thought that the Red Wings would be this good so far in 2014-15. Detroit is 6-2-2 in its last 10 games even though it is 1-5 in overtime and shootouts.

No. 7

Predators (19-8-2)

The Predators dropped to third in the Central as the Blackhawks and Blues have both been on serious rolls. They've allowed an NHL-low 57 goals.

No. 8

Islanders (20-10-0)

New York is 6-4-0 in its last 10 games. Along with the Blackhawks, the Islanders (5-0) are the only other team in the NHL that remains unbeaten in overtime and shootouts.

No. 9

Canadiens (19-10-2)

The Habs have won two games in a row but are 4-5-1 in their last 10. Montreal's goal-differential is only plus-4 and it is just 8-7-1 away from home.

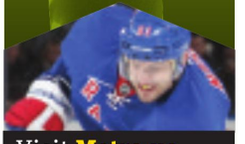
Visit **Metro.us** to see the rest of this week's NHL power rankings.

3 SPORTS

MLB

Yankees, Headley agree to contract

The Yankees and third baseman Chase Headley have agreed on a four-year contract worth $52 million. Though it was rumored that the Yanks' 2014 mid-season acquisition was being courted by the Giants, New York stepped up and inked the slugger to a long-term deal. Yanks GM Brian Cashman says Alex Rodriguez, who will be eligible to play in 2015, will have to compete for playing time with Headley. Last season, Headley hit .243 with 13 homers and 49 RBIs. He did play better in pinstripes, improving his average from .229 in San Diego to .262 in New York.



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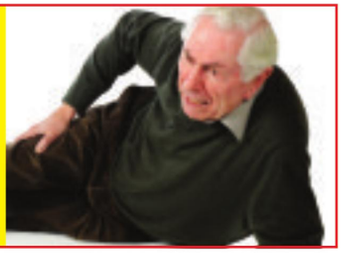

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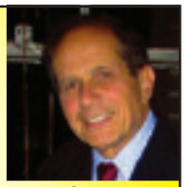

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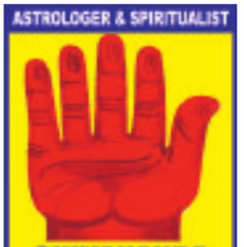

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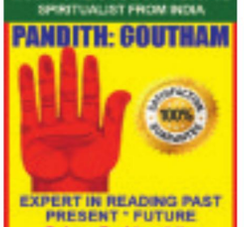

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